

Promises and Proposals

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by [Homesick_for_wilder_worlds](#)

Summary

Basically a one-shot detailing the times that Nikolai proposed to Alina both in and out of canon. Or nine times Nikolai proposed and one time Alina actually meant it when she accepted.

Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

The first time Nikolai proposes it is in a tent at the edge of the Fold. It's a political alliance, nothing more, he tells her as Mal holds him against the wall. That first time Alina punches him. But she still goes back to Os Alta to give him the support he needs to become king, and to rebuild the second Army with his help. It's just politics after all.

The second time it's just after they are reunited. He brushes his lips against hers and holds her hand through the night. He whispers, as the stars fall all around them, that they might find happiness together- even love. That time Alina holds his hand and allows him to stand beside her. He tells her that when this is all over he's going to ask her to marry him. That second time it isn't a proposal so much as a promise.

The third time is not long after, as they stand side by side on a frozen mountain peak. He presses an emerald ring into her hand, whispers a secret into her ear. He tells her that he believes that they will win the war. She smiles softly at him to let him know that he did the right thing when he took Genya's side. They speak, tentatively of the future; *their* future. What passes between them is not so much a proposal of love, but of trust.

The fourth time isn't really a proposal. It's the moment she realizes just how much she cares about him. The moment she sees him borne aloft on shadowy wings and loses every bit of courage she has been able to muster. She breaks away from Mal to kneel beside him, to say more to herself than to him "It's okay, you're okay." It's the moment he leaves her, torn away from her side by the need to keep her safe, to shield her from the desperate hunger the Darkling has placed inside him. That time it is less a proposal of love than of friendship, of caring about each other no matter what happens.

The fifth time is at the edge of the Fold, just before the battle with the Darkling. She calls the light to drive away the darkness inside him, to bring him back to her. It doesn't work. He slides the emerald onto her finger once more, a promise that when this is all over he will still stand beside her if she'll let him. That fifth time it's less a proposal of love than of hope.

The sixth time is after the battle, after he is finally king. She sits beside him as they talk quietly about what comes next. She has no power anymore, no claim to the Second Army, no longer Sol Koroleva, but he still asks. She smiles sadly and offers him the ring. "Keep it," he replies, all glib and charming confidence. She can see the hurt behind the mask. But she shakes her head and leaves him alone, returning to the safety of her tracker's arms.

The seventh time is when he visits Keramzin. They stand together, watching the children play with the toy boats he brought with him. Mal is off hunting somewhere in the woods, though Alina knows that he won't be gone for long, there's no way he's going to leave the two of them alone for long. "You know," Nikolai says conversationally, "If you ever get bored with this, you could always come back to Os Alta. Life as a housewife must be a bit dull after... everything." She rolls her eyes at him and he smirks. "Tsarita's have much more interesting lives, more politics and assassination attempts, and annoyingly snuffly little dogs." It's only a joke, but she still shoves him.

The eighth time is when she is visiting Os Alta a year later. They are standing by the Little Palace, looking down at the Etherialki pavilions by the lake, watching the young Grisha

playing. "Don't you miss this?" Nikolai says suddenly. She glances over and finds him searching her face, brow furrowed in curiosity. She chuckles, "Of course I do. I miss being here, watching this happen, I miss my friends. But I wouldn't trade my life with Mal for this." He nods, silently, and a few minutes later excuses himself quickly to go take care of some kingly business or other. She doesn't see much of him for the rest of that visit.

The ninth time is after Mal betrays her. She runs away to Os Alta and spends the night crying, but with all of her friends beside her. The next day Nikolai finds her sobbing in the gardens of the Little Palace. He lets her cry, lets her tell him the story of how she came home to find Mal in bed with another girl. When she is finally done he speaks softly, hesitantly, "Alina... I know you're not over Oretsev yet, but when you do... my offer still stands." When she looks up at him in confusion he smiles slightly, "I still need a Tsarita." She shakes her head, "Nikolai, you're my friend, and I appreciate the offer, but you need someone who can give you and alliance. A political marriage with the Kerch, or Shu, or even the Fjerdans. Maybe a Grisha. Not me, you don't need to offer to marry me just because you feel sorry for me." He laughs softly, "I'm not. I'm not offering for politics this time Alina, or out of pity." Her breath is clipped and sharp as she studies his expression, looking for a hint of mirth or insincerity. At last her gaze drops from his. "Nikolai... I haven't been in love with Mal for a long time, but... it's still too soon, you can't ask me that right now, please." He nods slowly, and they don't speak of it again for a long time after.

The tenth time is almost a year later. They stand on the deck of the new and improved *Kingfisher*, thousands of feet above the ground watching a meteor shower. She turns to look at him and finds him smirking at her. "What?" She asks, though a grin of her own is already spreading across her face. "I saw the necklace." Her hand went to her neck, to the slender golden chain and the ring that hung on it. "You did give it to me." He grinned, "But I didn't tell you to wear it around your neck." She glared at him as he smirked right back at her. "Alina, why don't we just get married already." she stared at him for a moment, dumbstruck at the utter nerve of him. But this time she knew he didn't ask because of politics, this time there wasn't anyone or anything standing in the way, this time they both felt the same way; this time, she said yes.

End Notes

Sorry if this sucked, I found it as one of my drafts on tumblr and decided to polish it up and give it an ending. Hope you thought it was okay, thanks for reading and if you liked it please comment of kudo!

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